



Caramel apple contamination source identified in listeriosis outbreak investigation

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MADISON – A California apple packing plant has been identified as the likely source of contamination in caramel apples that led to a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis, according to food safety officials at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). To date, 32 outbreak-related illnesses including six deaths have been reported among residents of 11 states. Three illnesses have been reported in Wisconsin.

Bidart Bros. of Bakersfield, California, is voluntarily recalling whole, fresh Gala and Granny Smith variety apples shipped in 2014. Some of the apples recalled may be sold under the brand names "Big B" and "Granny's Best," though they could also be sold under other brand names or with no brand at all.

Based on available information, consumers should dispose of any Gala and Granny Smith apples known to have been packed by Bidart Bros. If this information isn't easily determined, consumers should ask the retailer if the apples they purchased were from Bidart Bros. Since some of the implicated apples were further processed into caramel apples, food safety officials recommend that consumers also continue to dispose of commercially-produced, pre-packaged caramel apples.

Numerous agencies nationwide, including FDA, DATCP and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, continue to investigate this outbreak. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

Listeriosis is a life-threatening infection caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. It is particularly dangerous for pregnant women and their newborns, young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons with listeriosis often experience diarrhea and fever. Persons who believe they may have become ill with listeriosis should contact their health care provider.

For additional information about *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreaks, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/index.html>.

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